

Charles Gray

Good Afternoon, Senator Looney, Rep Janowski, and members of the Executive and Legislative Nominations Committee. I would like to first thank Governor Malloy for his confidence in me as expressed in re-nominating me to serve as a member of the Connecticut Airport Authority and to thank the committee for allowing me to appear today.

Over the past 20 years I have lived in Connecticut and worked in a variety of positions within the Hospitality Industry. During my professional career I have worked for privately held CT businesses, publicly traded national restaurant chains, and with international corporations. I am currently the Director of Hosted Solutions in North and Latin America for NCR Hospitality. These experiences have helped me in my role on the Board as I am a frequent flyer, logging over 3 million air miles, and giving me a unique perspective as a consumer in over 100 airports on six continents.

I have enjoyed my time so far on the Authority and thank the Chair, Mary Ellen Jones, and all the other members for creating a collaborative and collegial atmosphere on the board. I am proud of what we have accomplished in the last two years, especially the successful transition of assets and personnel from the Department of Transportation to the CAA and the hiring of our first Executive Director. The legislation passed by the General Assembly and signed by Governor Malloy creating the CAA has helped to lay a solid foundation for a strong aviation presence in CT into the future.

As Chair of the Finance, Operations and Governance Committee of the board, I have worked with fellow board members on the details of the transfer, changes in budget and updates to operational practices as a Quasi-governmental agency. The transfer was an extraordinarily complex series of agreements that resulted in over 450 parcels of land being transferred to the Authority across Bradley and five General Aviation Airports, and involved significant issues between the CAA and the FAA. But the legislation you passed, and the work we have done, is beginning to yield solid results. We approved our first Bradley Enterprise Zone Company, Nufurn, who will be bringing more industry and jobs to our area. We created an Economic Development Zone around Oxford Airport that should help support growth in that area of the state as well. At Bradley we have opened two new retail operations and have a third opening in late March / early April.

While these accomplishments are substantive and positive, we are not without our challenges. Airline consolidation, competition from other regional airports and increasing labor costs will continue to put pressures on Bradley and the CAA. Our General Aviation airports are not self-sufficient and continue to rely upon support from the General Assembly. We as a board will need to continue to innovate and work through solutions to these issues.

I have enjoyed my time on the Authority's Board and, if confirmed by the General Assembly, I look forward to continuing to serve the citizens of the State of CT as a member of the CAA.

Thank you for your time and for your attention, and I would be happy to answer any questions you may have for me.